

Safety Tips for Young Drivers

Wear your safety belt. In the last four and a half years, over 900 young people died in traffic crashes in Illinois. Motor vehicles crashes are the leading cause of death for people from 15 to 20 years old. Buckle up! It's the law, AND Illinois's graduated driver license law requires all drivers holding a permit or an intermediate license - and all of their passengers - to wear a safety belt at all times.

Obey the speed limit. Speeding is a major cause of traffic crashes. You should always obey the posted speed limit. More drivers are convicted of speeding than any other offense. Remember, this will affect your ability to apply for your full license under the Graduated Driver License law and can also affect your insurance rates. Remember:

- Always drive at a safe speed. The speed limit is the maximum speed allowed under normal conditions. Adjust your speed, taking into account your driving ability, the capability of your vehicle, the roadway and weather conditions.
- Slow down in rain, fog, snow and ice, and keep at least twice the normal stopping distance between you and vehicle in front of you.
- Slow down when approaching curves, intersections, downhill grades, heavy traffic and work zones.

Give driving your full attention. Distracted drivers are more likely to be involved in a traffic crash. You can be distracted by anything that takes your attention away from the task of driving.

- Pull off of the road to find a safe place to talk on the cell phone or look for items in the vehicle.
- Program radio stations or make CD selections before you get on the road.
- Do not let others ride with you if they distract you.
- Never read while you are driving.
- Plan your trip before you leave and get directions to your destination.
- Do not drink, put on makeup, shave, or eat while driving.

Lane usage and turns. Many traffic crashes occur because people do not stay on their side of the roadway or they make turns incorrectly. If you can't see oncoming traffic – DON'T TURN. WAIT for "an invitation".

- Make sure you are in a legal passing zone before passing another vehicle. It is illegal to pass on the right or the shoulder of the roadway. Do not pass on hills, curves or at intersections.
- Use turn signals about 100 feet before the turn or intersection and when changing lanes.
- Make sure your vehicle is in the proper lane for turning. Do not cross over into another lane of traffic.
- Slow down appropriately (or stop, if required) before making a turn.
- Pay attention to your lane position, keeping your vehicle in the center of your lane.

Don't drink and drive. Underage drinking is against the law. It is illegal for anyone under 21 to purchase, possess or consume ANY amount of alcohol in ANY situation. Under Illinois's Zero Tolerance law your license will be suspended if you're caught driving with even a trace of alcohol in your system - that means less than one drink can put you over the limit.

- Whatever you do, DO NOT attempt to drive yourself home, even if you think you're okay.
- Ask a friend who hasn't had any alcohol to give you a ride. A designated driver is the person who has had NO alcohol.
- If you and all your friends have been drinking, call a parent, older sibling or even a cab. Everyone will be glad you chose the safe way home.
- If you've been drinking at a friend's house, staying where you are is always safer than gambling with your own life and the lives of others.
- See a friend stumbling to their car? Get their keys and find them a safe way home. You could be saving their life.